

Montana Dental Hygienists' Association

DATE: February 17, 2011

RE: HB572 Supportive Testimony

Dear Chairman Arntzen and Members of the Business and Labor Committee:

The Montana Dental Hygienists' Association urges you to pass HB572 to restructure the Board of Dentistry for the following reasons:

- The current makeup of the Board of Dentistry allows one profession to dominate the other two, restraining free trade and restricting public access to the other two professions.
 - There are currently 603 active licensed hygienists in the state and 614 dentists –
 nearly equal with 16 dental hygiene students due to graduate from MSU-Great
 Falls in May. Yet the dentists have 5 members on the BOD and dental hygienists
 have only 2 members -- which is not equitable, representative or democratic!
 - Nearly every other imaginable profession has its own regulatory board: Nurses are
 not regulated by doctors; radiology techs are not regulated by radiologists;
 occupational therapists are not regulated by physical therapists; hearing aid
 dispensers are not regulated by audiologists. EACH of these professions has its
 OWN board because allowing one to regulate the other creates a conflict of interest
 and restrains free trade.
- 2. Professionals know their OWN profession best and are most capable of regulation, peer review and handling complaints.
- 3. The public will have the most say, as it should in order to protect the public.
- 4. With one less board member than currently, the expense to taxpayers will be less.

It is in the best interest of the public and of these three professions – dentistry, dental hygiene and denturitry to restructure the Board of Dentistry to allow three equal, interdependent committees to function separately within one umbrella board. Please pass HB572.

Sincerely,

Colleen Grass, President

Montana Dental Hygienists' Association

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